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ABSTRACT

A Think Box is a collection of independent activities based on one theme and housed in an easily transportable container. It is intended to be used as enrichment for students who have already completed their assigned work. The activities are designed to develop higher level skills such as critical thinking or creative reading. They can be part of any curriculum area, but they have particular applicability to reading. A Think Box generally contains 15 task cards, two games or puzzles, and three "other things." Included in this short article is an example of a task card used in a Think Box based on the Laura Ingalls Wilder book, "Little House in the Big Woods." (DC)

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# READING '83 Goes to Class

*For the Elementary Teacher*

## Reading for the able: The think box

by Jack Cassidy, Professor of Education, Millersville University, Pennsylvania

In every elementary classroom, there are some students who quickly master and complete assigned work. Thus, teachers are constantly looking for ways to provide and enrich reading experiences for these "able" learners. Several years ago, in an article for *G/C/T* ("The Think Box" November/December 1981), I described one way this could be accomplished—through the use of a Think Box. Although Think Boxes can be a part of any curriculum area, they have particular applicability in the area of reading.

Essentially, a Think Box is a collection of independent activities all based on one theme and housed in an easily transportable container. All of the activities are generally designed to develop higher level skills such as critical thinking or creative reading.

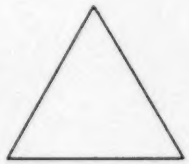
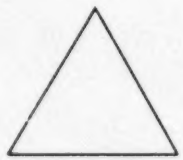
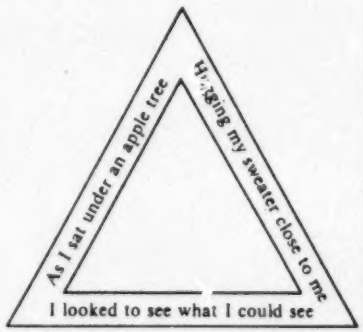
Generally, the Think Box includes: fifteen task cards, two games or puzzles, and three "other things." Task cards are individually designed, but they usually include a stimulus (such as a picture or a paragraph from a reading selection) followed by directions for completion of the task. Shown is an example of a task card developed in the form of a manila folder. This card was part of a Think Box constructed by a second grade teacher in Delaware. Developed to enrich the learning of the more able youngsters, the Think Box was an adjunct to her unit on the Laura Ingalls Wilder book, *Little House in the Big Woods*. While the teacher read the book to most of her students, the more able youngsters who had read the book on their own worked on the activities in the Think Box.

The games or puzzles in Think Boxes are intended to be enjoyable, but, at the same time, to enrich the students' higher level reading skills. Simple word searches or crossword puzzles, while enjoyable, generally do not enhance students' critical or creative thinking and are, therefore, not appropriate.

The "other things" included in a Think Box are just that—other things. They may pertain to one or more task cards, or they may be sources of reference or activities for enjoyment related to the box as a whole. The book, *Little House in the Big Woods*, and a record recounting some of the more important incidents were included the above Think Box. Another teacher, who had developed a Think Box on the theme "Electricity," actually included a large battery in her Think Box.

Stories or units from basal readers can provide excellent sources for ideas for Think Boxes. One fourth grade teacher developed Think Boxes to enrich each of the units in her basal reader. Thus, she had Think Boxes on animals, science and geography, adventure, people in today's world and folklore. While those who needed more help were receiving additional instruction on basic reading skills, the more able students were pursuing Think Box activities.

Certainly, the development of Think Boxes is not the complete answer to providing for the needs of the able learner, but it is one way of extending the thinking abilities of those already beyond the basics.

| Front of Folder | Inside Right | Back of Folder |
|---|---|---|
| TRIANGULAR TRIPLETS<br><br>**Goal:** To develop productive creativity (creative thinking)<br><br>  <br><br>**Materials:** Construction paper, pencil, book | A triplet is a poem where all three lines rhyme. Triangular triplets are especially fun to do because they can be read starting from any point on the triangle.<br>Look on the back of this folder and read the example. Notice how I can read it from any of the angles. Try it—starting at any corner.<br>Make up a triangular triplet on any part of *Little House in the Big Woods*. You may use the triangles in the pocket on the left.<br><br>  | A TRIANGULAR TRIPLET<br><br>  <br><br>• Developed by Mrs. Meg Macleod. Second grade, Christina School District, Delaware |

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